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Bush to offer aid package to Gulf Coast

WASHINGTON (AP) — Faced with the unprecedented destruction of a major U.S. city and communities across the Gulf Coast, President Bush is using an address to the nation to offer a package of new federal aid to help uprooted hurricane victims rebuild their lives.

Bush was announcing his reconstruction plan in New Orleans on Thursday night during a televised address also aimed at mending his image as a strong leader in a time of crisis.

It is Bush's first formal prime-time speech during more than two weeks of suffering along the Gulf, with most of the victims chased out by floodwaters in New Orleans. Bush planned to speak from the heart of the French Quarter, while across the city officials were still working to pump out waters and collect bodies left behind.

Bush planned to show sympathy for the misery brought on by the killer storm while charting a hopeful vision for the future. Many people, including members of the president's party, have said he should have given that kind of speech soon after the hurricane made landfall along the coast on Aug. 29.

Presidential advisers drafting the speech were working on plans for legislation that would provide job training and housing for people who have to start over, according to one Republican official.

The advisers also were discussing tax credits for businesses to stay in the devastated region, said the official, who was consulted but wanted to remain anonymous because Bush had yet to deliver the speech.

Polling shows Americans are willing to pay to rebuild New Orleans. According to a CBS-New York Times poll released Wednesday, 73 percent expect their taxes will increase as a result of Katrina, and more than half said they were willing to pay more taxes to help with Katrina recovery, job training and housing for victims.

Rather than speak before a live audience, Bush planned to stand alone and broadcast his message directly into the camera from the evacuated city's historic Jackson

Square, according to a White House official speaking on condition of anonymity since the site had not been announced.

The square and its most famed landmark, the St. Louis Cathedral, were on high enough ground to avoid flooding but did not escape damage from Katrina's 145-mph winds.

Two massive oak trees outside the 278-year-old cathedral came out by the roots, ripping out a 30-foot section of ornamental iron fence and snapping off the thumb and forefinger of the outstretched hand on a marble statue of Jesus.

Bush planned to make a stop in Mississippi before going to New Orleans for the speech, but the White House would not give details of his plans.

After the address, he was returning to the White House.

The format of the speech — Bush speaking alone to a national audience from a famous urban site — is reminiscent of his address from the front of the Statue of Liberty three years ago on the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox shuffled their Thursday schedules to air his remarks live. Bush planned to speak for about 30 minutes, beginning at precisely two minutes after 9 p.m. EDT to accommodate the broadcasters.

McClellan said Bush would describe new initiatives but would not announce the appointment of an official to oversee the recovery effort. Some GOP allies in Congress have urged the president to do just that.

Bush was to commit to meeting people's immediate needs and to supporting local ideas about how the new communities should look, McClellan said.

According to one White House aide, Bush also planned to acknowledge the role of poverty in the disaster that has affected many who could least afford it. Black Americans have been particularly angered by the government response to the disaster, with an overwhelming majority telling pollsters they believe help would have come quicker if so many of the people stranded were not poor and black.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

(Left to right) Mike Larmer, Boy Scout Troop 140 leader; Tonya Sager, helping with Troop 141; and Jan Barnum, cubscout leader

for Pack 140, checked off which boxes were going to which troop or pack on Thursday.

Scouts take part in pilot project

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

This year's popcorn fundraiser for Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts will be handled a bit differently, said Jan Barnum, cubscout leader.

Starting Friday, Sept. 23, all boy scouts will be out selling various types of popcorn in a pilot program entitled, "Show and Deliver."

The hope is that people purchasing popcorn products, she said, won't have to wait as long for popcorn delivery using this method.

The list of items will include some of the old favorites, Barnum said, such as microwavable butter or light buttered popcorn and kettle corn, along with the old-fashioned popping kernels.

There will also be chocolate and caramel tins available with a new cheese-type popcorn offered.

Popcorn for local troops, along with Atwood and Hoxie arrived in Colby on Thursday.

"We have 450 cases of popcorn for Colby alone," Barnum said.

When the scouts begin selling this year's popcorn, all troop lead-

ers are hoping that everyone will consider purchasing something.

"This is the only fundraiser for the cub scouts," she said, "and for the boy scouts, it's probably the biggest event of the year."

The proceeds from the popcorn sale benefit the younger cubs with program activities and the older scouts with paying expenses for summer trips.

In Colby, there is one cub scout pack with about 40 young boys in grades 1st through fifth, Barnum said.

The Boy Scout Troops 140 and

141 have about 10 and 23 boys respectively, said Tonya Sager, whose husband, Alan is the leader for Trooper 141.

Mike Larmer, is the leader in Troop 140.

"We hope this new way of selling popcorn is more convenient to customers," Barnum said.

All three groups will continue selling and delivering the popcorn until Monday, Oct. 24, she said.

For questions about the new procedure or scouting, call Barnum at 462-6503.

School board to discuss policy changes

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The Colby School Board will be looking at new and revised policies for the board handbook at its meeting Monday.

The board will meet at 7 p.m. at the Administration Building, 600 W. Third St.

Janel Andrews, secretary to the superintendent, said they will be going over the second reading of

policies recommended by the Kansas Association of School Boards. She said it's something that's done every year, and the association regularly updates boards around the states if there are legislative or other changes that will affect them.

"It meets district needs and when adopted, have the force and effect of law," she said.

Andrews said the Colby board used to have its own policies but

later chose to go with the state board association's policies because it keeps on top of things.

She said it's also in line with what the state does and the updates and notification of changes saves the school district from having to track down that information.

"They do this part for us," Andrews said.

Some of the updates this year deal with compensation and work as-

signments, supervision of medications, teachers and confidentiality, harassment, intimidation, bullying and menacing, field trips, truancy, local wellness policy and state education agency relations on quality assurances. Other items on the agenda are reports from the principals, superintendent and curriculum director and if necessary, personnel issues. The meeting is open to the public.

Quality time



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Mike Tubbs, left, and Don Saddler, (not pictured) played bingo with Rachel Urban during an after-school activity Thursday at the Colby Community Building. Nine different organizations have volunteered to each sponsor a week of activities for children in third, fourth and fifth grades on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. First Presbyterian Church of Colby was the sponsor this week. Spots are still open and parents can enroll their children by calling Kim Chain at the Regional Prevention Center.

College board meets Monday

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

The Colby Community College board of trustees will meet at 5 p.m., Monday, in the board room of the administration building.

In addition to routine agenda items, the board hear information on an affiliated veterinarian tech-

nology program at Kansas State University in Manhattan and a progress report on the Higher Learning Commission's focus visit, said Dr. Mikel Ary, president.

The board will discuss possible dates for holding a retreat and will be approving various contracts and agreements.

Action items will involve health insurance for employees and staff; a resignation; and October board meeting. All board meeting are open and the public is encouraged to attend.

For questions or a copy of the agenda, call 462-3984 or stop by 1255 S. Range Ave.

University considers campus expansion

OVERLAND PARK (AP) — The University of Kansas envisions a major research facility in suburban Kansas City, with Johnson County property owners picking up the tax tab as state support for higher education continues to decline.

"There's really not a research presence here," said Robert Clark, vice chancellor of the university's Edwards Campus in Overland Park. "What happens when you have a research presence ... is that you can grow businesses as a result of that research and you can retain businesses."

The plan would use a 2-mill property tax increase to fund the \$55 million expansion of the Edwards Campus.

It would first have to be approved by the Kansas Board of Regents and the Legislature, then would be subject to a countywide vote.

But if there is no support from the county's policymakers, Clark said,

the school will not make a formal proposal.

"We're not going to move forward until we're sure it's important to the community," he said.

The levy would raise about \$14 million each year for the campus, with the money going to build a new library, more classrooms, faculty offices, research space and a school of applied science and technology.

University officials want to hire 80 new faculty members, as well as new staff, and expand the number of degrees offered at the Edwards Campus from 27 to 45. The personnel additions would cost about \$7 million per year.

The average annual tax bill on a \$200,000 home would increase about \$46.

Clark pitched the idea last week to a group of Johnson County mayors, with mixed reactions.

Lenexa Mayor Mike Boehm called it a "marvelous" example of

foresight, while Carl Gerlach — mayor of the county's largest city, Overland Park — took a wait-and-see approach.

The plan would also help nearby Johnson County Community College, the president of the two-year school said.

"It doesn't compete against the community college," Charles Carlson said. "It allows working adults to stay in the area without going someplace and getting their bachelor's degree."

Rep. Ed O'Malley, R-Roeland Park, said he would support placing the measure on the county ballot. "The Edwards Campus is a jewel for Johnson County and one that many people do not fully appreciate," O'Malley said.

"Having a fully built-out university presence in Johnson County can do a tremendous amount for economic development in the area," O'Malley said.

